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Secret report claims Carterites hid Soviet tricks to aid SALT-2

BY A WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Carter administration concealed the discovery of Soviet attempts to "impede U.S. verification capabilities" in order to try to get congressional approval of the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-2), according to a Reagan administration report prepared in connection with the nuclear weapons reduction negotiations now going on in Geneva.

The document, marked "Top Secret," was made available to The Washington Times by a federal official. It charges that the United States discovered that the Russians were digging false craters, farther from targets, to imply a lower level of accuracy for the warheads on their strategic land-based missiles.

"The Soviets were trying to increase the counterforce threat while delaying U.S. perception of the threat and inhibiting U.S. reaction," the document says, alleging that Moscow's action was "in violation of SALT-1."

But a source close to the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in Geneva told The Times the false craters

did not violate SALT-1 verification procedures because, "There is nothing in SALT-1 which restricts accuracy."

SALT-1 limits silos and launchers according to range but not number of warheads. Neither SALT-1, the unratified SALT-2 nor U.S. proposals for START deal with missile accuracy.

The source said retired Lt. Gen. Edward Rowny, who leads the U.S. START delegation for which the report was prepared, did not raise the point at Geneva "because it was not germane." Raising it also would have revealed American knowledge of the false craters.

The source noted that while U.S. strategic missiles are test-launched into the Pacific Ocean, "which levels out rather quickly after impact," the Soviet Union, launching into Siberia, had a more difficult problem in trying to conceal the range and accuracy of its missiles.

The START document says that after the Russians arrested a local agent of U.S. intelligence, code named Trigon, in early 1977, the Soviet Union concen-

trated on limiting U.S. communications intelligence, partly by increasing microwave bombardment of the American Embassy in Moscow.

During the 1977 fire at the embassy, Russian officials followed firemen in penetrating "the roof and upper floors of the embassy, gaining further access to sensitive U.S. intercept capabilities," it says.

The report does not suggest that such counterespionage activity by the Soviet Union is a breach of any agreement, but it does charge that sophisticated American intercept equipment was "confiscated" by Soviet authorities, even though it entered the country under diplomatic seal.

The document recalls a possible Soviet breach of SALT-1 verification procedures which was made public during the Carter administration — that the Russians were encoding the telemetry of their ballistic missiles and using low-power telemetry which is difficult to intercept.

Telemetry — radio transmission of measurements — enables ground controllers (and adversary verifiers) to follow the performance of a test missile. Both sides use secret coding called encryption to protect new technology but are required by SALT-1 not to encrypt basic data.

The document says the two "most important SIGINT NTM systems" were "penetrated and compromised" by two young Americans who were sentenced in California in 1976 for taking classified documents from TRW Inc., a defense contractor, to the Soviets in Mexico City. "SIGINT" means signal, or communications, intelligence. "NTM" refers to national technical means of verification.

The Russians also "tightened the standards for physical camouflage and concealment" and "increased nighttime activities" to inhibit U.S. spy satellites, the START briefing paper says. Such measures are not a treaty breach, but they enhance the need for "humint" — human intelligence, or spying, on the ground.

The document charges that the Carter administration "underestimated significantly the rapidity of Soviet accuracy improvement and deployment rates" for land and submarine based multiwarhead strategic missiles in order to overcome conservative congressional resistance to any arms-limitation treaty.

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